

March 17, 2011

Testimony in Opposition To:

H.B. No. 6553 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING DOCUMENTATION OF LICENSING FOR WORKERS HIRED TO REPLACE STRIKING OR LOCKED-OUT HEALTH CARE EMPLOYEES.

Good afternoon, Senator Musto, Representative Tercyak and to the members of the Human Services committee. My name is Matthew V. Barrett. I am Executive Vice President of the Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities (CAHCF). I am here to testify on behalf of our association of 115 nursing homes *in opposition* to **H.B. No. 6553 AN ACT CONCERNING DOCUMENTATION OF LICENSING FOR WORKERS HIRED TO REPLACE STRIKING OR LOCKED-OUT HEALTH CARE EMPLOYEES.**

We are opposed to the bill because the proposed requirements---that persons hired to replace striking or locked-out health care employees present valid certifications or licenses to the Commissioners of Public Health and Social Services prior to commencing employment---are redundant, costly and potentially harmful.

Today there is a working system in place whereby the health care institution has to verify to DPH that ALL employees are appropriately licensed for the tasks that they perform. This is true when there is a strike and at all other times. The facility must check licensure/certification with DPH before hiring and annually. In fact, it is fundamental to DPH's regulatory and licensing duties and responsibilities to assure that all employee licensure requirements are met and DPH practices, which include on-site licensing verification, implement these requirements both during labor actions and in routine operations. As such, the bill is unnecessary and duplicative and puts artificial obstacles in the way of getting appropriate care to residents in the event of a strike. Should these redundant obstacles delay or interrupt staffing, then the policy undermines patient care. Finally, the bill is not only a costly duplication for the facilities. The state agencies---DPH and DSS---would have to find staff to implement and comply with these unnecessary verifications.

We urge the committee to take no action on the bill for these reasons.

For more information, contact: Matthew V. Barrett, CAHCF Executive Vice President at mbarrett@cahcf.com or 860-290-9424.